

Message Text

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ACTION SIL-01

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 PM-03

H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 AID-05 OMB-01 IO-10 /067 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5617

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

CINCPAC

SECDEF WASHDC

UNCLAS SAIGON 5344

DEPT FOR GOOD S/IL ALSO PASS NSC AND IBS/NCA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MILI, PINT, VS

SUBJECT: WAR CRIME IN DA NANG

REFERENCE: STATE 4720

1. FOLLOWING INFORMATION WAS GATHERED IN A FIRST PERSON INTERVIEW WITH AN EYE WITNESS. DETAILS GIVEN TO CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR (SUTHERLAND) SHORTLY AFTER INTERVIEW.

2. A PFC FROM THE 4TH PLATOON, 1ST COMPANY, 5TH BATTALION 147TH MARINE BRIGADE, FIRST MARINE DIVISION: HIS UNIT WAS STATIONED IN HUONG TRA DISTRICT, ABOUT 17 KILOMETERS NORTH OF HUE.

THEY WOKE UP THE MORNING OF MARCH 27TH TO FIND ALL OFFICERS EXCEPT THE BATTALION COMMANDER GONE. THIS MAN, A LT. COL., WAS FURIOUS AT THE SITUATION AND, ACCORDING TO THE INFORMANT TORE OFF HIS BADGES OF RANK AND THREW THEM ON THE GROUND. HE RETREATED ON FOOT WITH HIS BATTALION TO HUE, AND LATER TO THUAN AN, A MILITARY EMBARKATION POINT 15 KILOMETERS EAST OF HUE ON THE COAST. TWO DAYS LATER THEY WERE PUT ON BOARD AN EVACUATION

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CRAFT THAT TOOK ABOUT 20 HOURS TO REACH DA NANG. THEY WERE

PACKED IN SO TIGHTLY THAT "MANY" PEOPLE DIED OF APPARENT SUFFOCATION, THE BATTALION COMMANDER AMONG THEM.

3. THE INFORMANT AND NINE FRIENDS OF ABOUT THE SAME RANK WERE GIVEN NO CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS UPON ARRIVAL IN DA NANG, AND THE SITUATION IN THE CITY WAS CONFUSING TO THEM. THEY TOOK A ROOM IN THE THANH THANH HOTEL AT MIDNIGHT AND SLEPT, SOME ON THE TWO BEDS, SOME ON THE FLOOR. ABOUT 0800 ON THE 30TH THEY WENT OUT TO FIND SOMETHING TO EAT. A FEW MINUTES LATER THEY SAW BUT WERE NOT SEEN BY A JEEP LOAD AND TWO CIVILIAN TRUCK LOADS OF NVA, NEAR THE TRUONG VUONG THEATER ON DONG KHANH STREET. THEY RAN TO TRUONG NU VUONG STREET AND TURNED TOWARDS BACH DANG. ABOUT 30 NVS CAME OUT OF AN ALLEY BEHIND THEM, BEGAN SHOOTING AND YELLING FOR THEM TO STOP. EIGHT OF THE TEN DID SO. THE INFORMANT AND ONE OTHER MARINE KEPT RUNNING; HE REALIZED AFTER 50 OR 75 METERS THAT THE SHOOTING HAD STOPPED AND NO ONE WAS CHASING THEM. LOOKING BACK HE SAW THE EIGHT MARINES, THEIR WEAPONS IN THE STREET, LINED UP FACING THE NVA. THE NVA THEN SHOT THEM ALL. OUR INFORMANT RECALLS ALL THEIR FIRST NAMES, BUT THE FAMILY NAME OF ONLY ONE: NGUYEN VAN TRAI; DONG; HOANG; LANG; CHANH; TAU; HUNG; TRUNG. HE AND HIS FRIEND LATER REACHED NHA TRANG BY BOAT, SAIGON BY ROAD. MARTIN

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